



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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"Tell me the meaning of life.
Is it to struggle and do,
To press through the battle-smoke,
To stand by a friend, and be true ?
Oh, it fadeth fast.

"Tell me the meaning of death.
Is it the end of the day,
Or a doubtful forward step
When the trees hide the trend of the way,
And the sky's o'ercast ?

"Tell me the meaning of love.
Naught but a light in the eyes,
Or the barter of soul for soul,
And the victor's only prize ?
What else shall last ?"

We are very glad that Mr. Arthur Burrell has been induced to attach his name to work which the *Spectator* (in connection with another and an unowned production), characterises as "surpassing."

Any mothers of sons who do not know it already will thank me for recommending *Schoolboy Morality* (Eliot Stock), a little book, or pamphlet, which approaches a most difficult subject with singular delicacy, helpfulness, and wisdom.

Many mothers write that Miss Miller's "Pussy Box" has been a great help in teaching their children to read. We are glad to be able to announce that a second little reading box has been prepared on the same lines. (Price 6d. A. Roche, 84, Lea High Road, S.E.)

THE "P.R." LETTER BAG.

[*The Editor is not responsible for the opinions of correspondents.*]

DEAR EDITOR,—In those of this month's magazines that I have yet had time to glance at, the article that struck me as most likely to be of interest to your readers was that by Professor Mahaffy, in the *Nineteenth Century*, on "Sham Education." Of course, it deals primarily with Irish schools, and perhaps equally, of course, the Professor has many shots at various enemies, political and other, but there were many passages that I marked strongly condemnatory of the evils of competitive examinations, payment by results, &c., and the damage done by them to true education and scholarship which, but for considerations of space, I should have been glad to quote.—Yours, &c.,

H. P.

DEAR EDITOR,—I shall be glad if you will put a notice in the next number of the *Parents' Review*, asking if any readers have for disposal the following Nos. of Vol. I.—viz., 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10. Also Vol. I. complete, either bound or unbound, and to let me know what they will take for them.

I see that in the American *Educational Review* for November is an article on "The Habitual Postures of School Children." This and other articles that I notice in the table of contents should be useful. Price 35 cents.—Yours, very faithfully,

H. P.

DEAR EDITOR,—May I ask in confidence the meaning of your editorial "P.S." to the January number? For if you think readers will suppose it is written from an "R. C." point of view, it might be well to append a note to the effect that the historian Griffis, from whose work, *Mikado's Empire* (the standard book on Japan), the principal facts were taken, is a Protestant missionary of many years standing, and his accounts are the most thrilling and touching imaginable of the steadfastness of those blessed children of the sunrise.

In the same way, the account of the Jesuits in Canada came from the Protestant Professor Parkman, and both narrations are simply *historical facts*, though coming from the opposite camp.

VERA.

[The Editor's note referred to the causes which led the gentle Japanese to turn on the missionaries they had so frankly welcomed.]

DEAR EDITOR.—A young mother is using an oil-stove for heating the children's bedroom. The stove is left burning all night. The oil used is a Scotch oil of the best make, with a flash point of 100 deg. Fahr. She wishes to know if there are hurtful gases thrown off by an oil-stove, and if there is any danger of explosion with an oil at a flashing point of 100 deg. Fahr. She finds this way of heating the room to have several advantages over a fire, but she wishes to know if it is equally safe and healthy. Y. M.

DEAR EDITOR,—As one of the weak-natured people, "whose eyes grow tender over drowning flies," as, in short, a sympathiser with many friends of living creatures, from St. Francis to Schopenhauer, I wish to thank Mr. Thorneley for his permission to young entomologists to study their beetles unboiled. But I should like to go a step farther and ask, Why boil them at all?

I suppose what we really want our youngsters to get at, is a thorough knowledge of the lives and characters of surrounding society, whether two-legged or otherwise. We should like them to know, if not to name in dog-Latin, every creature they come across, and to tell at a glance whether it is friend or foe ; to sympathise with its happiness, or to be warned by its malice ; to love its virtues, and admire its beauty ; sometimes, to tolerate its shortcomings and compassionate its deformities. I think this intimacy with the facts of life and Nature is what we have to encourage, and not the mere habit of abstract classification and mechanical collection.

Classification is the grammar of science ; the means, not the end : never to be set before young people as the goal of their endeavours. Why do we make them read books ? Not to learn grammar, but to gain thoughts. Why study music and art ? Other people's theories of harmony or perspective will serve them, and a little will suffice ; but they must gather for themselves the golden harvest of noble impressions. And so, in putting natural history before them, the aim of our teaching is not to make them classifiers and collectors, but to make them observers.

Now, why are they told to kill insects ? Simply to classify them. Are there not yet books enough, and museums enough, to teach the necessary grammar of the science without making every boy his own Keating ? Don't we all know that the true "Natural History" of Animals, their growth and development, cannot be traced in the dead creature ? that their place in Nature, their use in the world, their domestic economy, their habits and characters, can only be learnt from the life ? Indeed, it is just this study that is the educational part of the affair, encouraging note-taking and record-keeping, reason and observation ; and the only objection to it is that it may stimulate observation to an inconvenient degree, for it suits some people better to keep their youngsters from too adventurous investigation. Still, compared with this form of study, collecting is a mere unintellectual habit, a very rudimentary form of the scientific spirit, not without its baser side and moral risks. I would have my lad and lasses want to be Gilbert Whites and Thoreaus, not curators. Science, for them, I hope will mean (in the

department we were talking of) to watch the worms with Darwin, and the ants with Lubbock, not to bag specimens as the be-all and end-all of their studies.

The question is a very wide one ; and I can only hint at what I would say. I raise no theories about the rights of animals, the thin end of the wedge that "rifts the lute" of natural harmony, and the Hogarthian stages of cruelty. As you say about the Japanese persecutors, mothers should consider all sides ; and fathers may even admit the desirability of occasionally boiling and impaling both Christians and beetles. There are plenty of people ready to discuss that side of the question. But I am sure that the best and truest science involves no form of death ; it means the worship of life and the knowledge of its laws.

W. G. C.

DEAR EDITOR,—After reading your notice in "Our Work" (January Number) about the necessity of procuring more subscribers, I wrote to ask the publishers to send me some numbers of the *Parents' Review* to distribute. The parcel arrived this morning, and my first attempt was successful. I only hope they all will be, for we cannot afford to lose such a magazine as yours is. I have received twenty-four copies, and am circulating them through England, India, and America, and across the front page of each number I have written "New subscribers *urgently* needed. Specimen copy." Of course I am also writing personally to the various friends I am sending them to ; but I thought that little notice might be the means of getting outsiders to join, for every one has magazines about their rooms, and naturally wish to look at them often, and thus our circle has a chance of being enlarged indefinitely. Perhaps you may like to suggest this idea to some more of your readers. If we could only agree to *co-operate*, the magazine would then be relieved from all future periods of anxiety.

To parents who educate their children at home (with a governess), and those in foreign lands, the magazine is invaluable ; and even for those like myself (with an only child, a girl, who needs young companions so much that we are obliged to let her attend a day-school) there is never a number but what contains something of use, and for which one is the better for knowing.

With best wishes for its success in this new year, and many others to follow,

I am, truly yours,

G. M.

DEAR EDITOR,—If it is not too late I should like to call the attention of your readers to an article in the January Number of the *Review of Reviews* on the Gouin system of teaching French, entitled, "A Royal Road to Languages." Many will doubtless remember the original article on this system which appeared in the same magazine last May. The Editor now gives the result of six months' experiment on his own children, and the account is most suggestive and should certainly be perused with care by all who are interested in the subject.

The valuable series of papers in the *Girls' Own Paper* which you

noticed on the appearance of the first in November last is continued monthly, and as they are now signed they are seen to be by Dr. A. T. Schofield, to whom every one who knows the writer's work must have from the first assigned them. No one has a more thorough grasp of the subject than he, or a more telling method of presenting it.

I noticed in the *Daily Chronicle* for January 23, a review of Miss Florence Nightingale's "Health at Home," being a report of the valuable work which she is doing under the Bucks County Council in the training of Rural Health Missioners. This is a book to be secured by all our branch libraries, and it is to be hoped that our members will take advantage of the hints she gives and see in what way we can follow on her lines.

The February magazines do not seem to me to have much that bears on our work, the only article I have noted being "The Academic Spirit in Education," by John A. Hobson, in the *Contemporary*.

PATER JUNIOR.

OUR WORK.

House of Education.—Our readers will like to know that our first batch of four students have all succeeded in obtaining the House of Education Certificate, with commendation from the Examiners, P. A. Barnett, M.A., Principal of the Borough Road Training College; and H. C. Beeching, M.A. We give the Class List: Violet Parker, 1st Class; Florence de Montmorency, 2nd Class; May Culverhouse and Mabel Hall, 3rd Class. Miss Parker and Miss de Montmorency have obtained also the diploma of the National Health Society during their training.

There are at present seventeen students in residence, of various ages and attainments; but all filled with enthusiasm for their work.

The Parents' Review.—We make an extract from a letter of Mr. Perrin's, which we commend to our readers: "Can you induce your friends to subscribe for six or any number of copies each to distribute? I will see to the sending of them, either in a batch to each subscriber or separately to each friend they may name, to save them trouble."

The Parents' Review School.—The children's examination papers show very steady progress, and letters from parents bear witness to the pleasure the little people take in their work.

The Mothers' Educational Course.—Some of the papers sent in at Christmas are a source of heartfelt delight, so gratifying is it to find mothers studying the theory of education with the ability and intelligence of the professed student added to the peculiar insight and tenderness which belongs to a mother only.